

FOIAb3b

11 January 1952

2137 M Bldg.

Dear Ed,

This is just a note to let you know that I miss you and good old D/I. I often think of you all and wonder how you are coming along with all your basic studies or whether a number of flaps may have sabotaged your basic work altogether.

I have found this tour of duty over here an interesting experience. For one thing it has given me an appreciation of the collection end of things that I did not have before. I have come to realize that there is quite an art to interrogation. It is a great deal different than a Washington debriefing, where an expert in a particular field exploits an individual who is to some degree knowledgeable in that field. Over here the interrogator has to develop, or rather determine, a source's knowledgeability and then question him on a variety of subjects on which the interrogator knows little or nothing.

The interrogation is only the beginning. The interrogator's notes must then be whipped into an organized, coherent form, which in the case of a man whom I have been exploiting who rambles all over the place, is no mean job. I came over here with the idea that there was too much editing in the field, that reports should be as much as possible left in the words of the source. I still feel there is too much "overediting", but I am much more sympathetic towards editors than I was two months ago.

Industrial intelligence, particularly its technical aspects, isn't faring too badly in [redacted]. The Air Force has approximately 50 technical specialists attached to various collection agencies over here. The Army has some, too, though not so many as the Air Force. I talked with an AF major who has recently had five years production experience with Northrop. They also have a machine tool man at AF headquarters [redacted]. Then there is [redacted] group of scientists.

On the economic aspects of industry, there is room for considerable guidance, particularly on the types of economic information that can be extracted from apparently low-level sources. I feel that I have been of some help in this regard, though the results will accrue gradually, rather than immediately.

As for immediate help to D/I, my stay here has so far been not too productive. Most of the sources at [redacted] are either foreign trade or military personnel. I have had to spend a week working on a number of a [redacted] who was remarkably unobservant except in his own bailiwick which was limited to the purchase of textile needles and spare parts. However, someone in Washington had heard that he was a highly knowledgeable source on East-West trade and orders came through for us to give him a prompt and complete debriefing. He could hardly have known less on the subject.

I am quite concerned about the apparent lack of support accorded this mission from headquarters, which I intend to mention in my next report to the AD. Since Mike and I arrived on 13 November, we have received not a single communication from the home office. This despite several requests for information in our first report of 27 November. I fully realize how busy everyone is over there. However, I feel that there should be a [redacted] in requirements is good communication between headquarters and the field.

I have missed Mike since his departure, and regret that he could not stay on over here. He is ~~very~~ highly regarded in the theater and has a wide circle of contacts. As you know he has a faculty for getting along well with people, which is a great asset over here where inter-service jealousies are prevalent. I consider myself fortunate in having had Mike to show me the ropes.

I had an interesting experience last week trying to procure some Czech bearings from a Skoda driver. I made a deal with the driver of a Skoda taxi, telling him that I used to work in the bearing industry and as a hobby collected bearings from various countries as other people collect stamps. I offered him 30 marks (\$7.50) for his six bearings and in addition agreed to furnish new bearings. We first travelled around to several bearing dealers (VKF and RIV) buying the new bearings and then looked for a garage to do the job. We got a number of refusals, each time using referral to the authorized Skoda-Tatra dealer. This I refused to do for fear that the Skoda-Tatra dealer might become suspicious and report the matter to Czechos. We finally found a small garage which went to work on the matter about as inefficiently as anything I have ever seen. He got the first three bearings off without any trouble. The fourth on the right front wheel stuck, and he estimated it would take him two hours to take the wheel apart and get it back together again. I told him to skip it since it would have been the same as the one we took from the left wheel. Then he started to jack up the back wheel. After several unsuccessful attempts with two little hydraulic jacks, I suggested they look in the trunk of the car for a bumper jack. They found one, a queer looking affair. "A damned Russian Jack", complained the mechanic. After a while the car was perched precariously on the "Russian Jack" (everything behind the Iron Curtain is Russian to these Germans), but the wheel housing wouldn't come off. The mechanic took a huge mallet and started beating on the hub cap, while the car rocked back and forth. The taxi driver and I were perspiring with anxiety. Finally the mechanic said he would have to build a fire under the wheel housing to expand it sufficiently so that it would come off the axle. I had had enough and could see myself being sued for the price of one destroyed Skoda taxi. My enthusiasm for Sovmat and the particular 6208 single-row radial bearing had vanished, and I called a halt to the proceedings.

The most satisfying part of the whole thing was the wait for that first bearing to come off. Would it after all be only a German bearing? I experienced quite a thrill when I wiped the grease off of it and saw the inscription "Made in Czechoslovakia". I am still after a ~~very~~ rear wheel bearing.

Am sending you a separate report on other aspects of the Skoda car. For \$1000 I'll purchase and send you the whole car by diplomatic pouch!

Ed, I haven't written you before because I felt the right channel should be through official reports to AD/EX. However, since you may not have been seeing them, I thought an informal note to you would be in order.

Be sure to keep open a slot somewhere in your I/O for me! My regards to everyone.

Sincerely,

Dick